



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

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DEEP-WATER GROUPER COMMERCIAL FISHERY IN GULF OF MEXICO FEDERAL WATERS WILL CLOSE AT 12:01 A.M., LOCAL TIME, JUNE 23, 2005

Based on current statistics, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has determined the available commercial quota of 1.02 million pounds for deep-water grouper (misty grouper, snowy grouper, yellowedge grouper, warsaw grouper, and speckled hind) will be reached on or before June 22, 2005. Accordingly, NMFS is closing the commercial deep-water grouper fishery in the Gulf of Mexico exclusive economic zone (EEZ) from 12:01 a.m., local time, on June 23, 2005, until 12:01 a.m., local time, on January 1, 2006. The operator of a vessel with a valid reef fish permit having deep-water grouper aboard must have landed and bartered, traded, or sold such deep-water grouper prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, June 23, 2005.

During the closure, the bag and possession limits specified in 50 CFR 622.39(b) apply to all harvest or possession of deep-water grouper in or from the Gulf of Mexico EEZ, and the sale or purchase of deep-water grouper taken from the EEZ is prohibited. The prohibition on sale or purchase does not apply to sale or purchase of deep-water grouper

that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, June 23, 2005, and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

NMFS is dedicated to protecting and preserving the nation's living marine resources and their habitats through scientific research, management, and enforcement. NMFS provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to customers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing stewardship to our nation's coastal and marine resources. This and other news releases are available on the SERO homepage at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

NMFS is an agency of the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

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